NEBRASKA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
OFFICE OF EARLY CHILDHOOD

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION GRANT PROGRAM
Request for Proposals (RFP) – Guidance for Writing Applications

A. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

1. <u>Purpose</u>

The Nebraska Department of Education (NDE), Office of Early Childhood, is issuing a RFP to fund competitive grants for new or expanded early childhood education programs in local communities. Eligible applicants are school districts (hereafter referred to as district), individually or in cooperation with other school districts, and educational service units (ESUs). NDE intends to fund programs widely distributed across the state in both rural and urban areas. **Expanded early childhood programs means to increase the number of children being served (e.g., expanding from one classroom to two classrooms or expanding from 10 or fewer children to 17 – 20 children) or to increase the length of the day (e.g., from part-day to full-day or from school day to full working day).**

The intent of the Early Childhood Education Grant Program is to help communities move away from categorical programs for *at-risk* four-year-old children. Programs are expected to serve the targeted population within inclusive classrooms of three and four-year-old children that represent a range of abilities and disabilities and the social, linguistic, and economic diversity of families within the community. **Grants are intended to improve equity of access to early childhood education programs; therefore, the program grant should increase the number of children served in the community or expand the duration and intensity of an existing program through the provision of comprehensive center-based programs**.

Funds are prioritized to provide grants to programs to serve the target population of *at-risk* four-year old children eligible to attend kindergarten in the following year. The criteria for *at-risk* is defined as children:

- Whose family income qualifies them for participation in the federal free or reduced lunch program,
- Who reside in a home where a language other than spoken English is used as the primary means of communication,
- Whose parents are younger than eighteen or who have not completed high school; and/or
- Who were born prematurely or at low birth weight as verified by a physician.

Please Note: The awarding of any grants is subject to the availability of state funds.

2. <u>Guide to Serving Children Birth to Kindergarten Entrance Age</u>

The NDE Office of Early Childhood has a written guide to serve as a resource for new and existing programs in districts and ESUs developing and implementing high-quality early childhood education programs that meet the regulations in *Rule 11 – Regulations for the Approval of Prekindergarten Programs Established by School Boards or Educational Service Units and for the issuance of Early Childhood Education Grants*. The document, *Early Childhood Programs: A Guide to Serving Children Birth to Kindergarten Entrance Age in Center-Based Early Childhood Programs*

operated by Public School Districts, Educational Service Units and their Community Partners, is designed to provide strategies and resources to assist districts and community-based organizations in working together to assure young children and their families have equity of access to early childhood education programs in their communities. This resource document is online at http://www.education.ne.gov/OEC/B_5_programs.html

3. Program Expectations

Early childhood education programs are required to operate in compliance with requirements of this RFP, *Rule 11 – Regulations for the Approval of Prekindergarten Programs Established by School Boards or Educational Service Units and for the issuance of Early Childhood Education Grants*, and any other applicable state statutes. Requirements have been written to reflect research-based elements of quality intended to produce positive outcomes for children. Elements of quality for early childhood education program grants must be described in the application and must include:

•   A strong family involvement/education component recognizing the central role of parents in their children's development and learning
•   Staff who are well-trained and optimum staff – child ratios in programs providing direct services to children
•   Developmentally and linguistically appropriate and culturally sensitive curriculum, practices, and assessment
•   Provision of services that are sensitive to the economic and logistical needs and circumstances of families
•   Integration of children of diverse social and economic characteristics
•   Inclusion of children with disabilities
•   A sound program evaluation component
•   Continuity with programs in kindergarten and primary grades
•   Procedures to ensure participating children and families have access to comprehensive nutrition and health and social services
•   A parent/community advisory group which provides substantive ongoing direction to the program

4. Community Partnerships

Districts or ESUs interested in this funding opportunity are required to work cooperatively with existing community programs and services. The program partners must participate in the preparation of the application, be involved in the planning process, and actively participate as members of the advisory committee of the program. Partners that exist within the community may include, but are not limited to, cooperatives of public school districts, ESUs, and existing non-public community programs. Examples of community partners include Head Start, non-profit early care and education programs, family child care homes, family resource centers, family service agencies, etc.
Grant programs may expand, but must not supplant programs and services within the community or service area that are currently provided using state or federal funds. The program site may be identified as that which is most suited to meet the needs of the community. It is expected that programs will follow the highest of the partner's standards and regulations without compromising the integrity of other rules, regulations, and/or standards.

A Statement of Partnership Commitment from each identified partner must accompany the application. This statement should list the resources, time, ongoing representation, etc. that the agency or organization, including the applicant district or ESU, is committing to the partnership at the time of the grant application. A template is included with the application form for each agency or organization to complete.

Please Note: The Statement of Partnership Commitment form is not intended to take the place of a formal written partnership agreement.

It is required that formal partnership agreements with the partners be established by the end of year one. These written agreements should define each partner's contribution(s) to the success of the early childhood education program. Common components of partnership agreements include a statement of purpose, a description of each partner's contribution to the partnership, action to be taken if the terms of the agreement cannot be met, a timeline for reviewing/revising the agreement, and yearly signatures and dates. The written agreement must be kept on file with the grantee district or ESU. Districts and ESUs should provide copies of the agreement to the partners. A copy of the written agreement will be submitted as part of the annual monitoring process.

Successful partnerships find that working through a community needs assessment process leads to providing integrated programs for young children in a manner which promotes high level interagency partnerships, resulting in effective and efficient utilization of interagency resources. This process includes the:

- Identification of individual agency and organization regulations
- Identification of the activities each agency/organization currently implements
- Determination of area(s) of duplication and gap(s) in services
- Prioritization of community needs
- Development of goals or expectations for the partnership and program
- Development of strategies or activities for the partnership and program
- Determination of criteria to measure success of the partnership.

Further information about developing successful community partnerships and templates for partnership agreements can be found in the resource document, *Early Childhood Programs: A Guide to Serving Children Birth to Kindergarten Entrance Age in Center-Based Early Childhood Programs operated by Public School Districts, Educational Service Units and their Community Partners* available online at http://www.education.ne.gov/OEC/B_5_programs.html

5. Local Advisory Committee

A local early childhood advisory committee must be established with membership representing families and community members. The membership might include, but is not limited to, existing child care centers, family child care providers, preschools, Head Start programs, providers of early intervention and early childhood special education services, resource and referral agencies, parents, health and social service personnel, and school personnel representing existing district programs for children birth through age eight. An existing early childhood advisory group can meet the requirement for the advisory group if the representation includes those persons listed above and the mission of the group encompasses the purpose of this program. If an existing advisory group is used, the meeting agenda must include time to focus specifically on the needs of the early childhood grant program.

Please Note: The advisory committee is subject to the requirements of the Open Meetings Act.

6. Curriculum Selection and Development

As stated in *Rule 11 – Regulations for the Approval of Prekindergarten Programs Established by School Boards or Educational Service Units and for the issuance of Early Childhood Education Grants*, the early childhood program shall provide a play-oriented learning environment which facilitates optimal growth and development of children, with opportunities for age-appropriate learning experiences that occur through active involvement with people and materials. The program curriculum and practices should provide a variety of developmentally appropriate, experiential activities which:

- Develop social skills and promote a positive self-concept in each child
- Encourage each child to think, reason, question, and experiment
- Foster both receptive and expressive language development and provide early literacy experiences

- Develop an understanding of quantities of things, of time, and of space
- Stimulate each child in creative expression and appreciation of the arts
- Provide opportunities for physical development

Decisions about curriculum should take into account the ages of the children, the role of the teacher and the child in the learning process, and the areas of learning. Considerations when selecting curricula include:

- How does the curriculum define the roles of the teacher and the child in the learning process?
- What domains of learning are addressed? Are they integrated?
- Does the curriculum provide guidance for differentiating instruction?
- Is there research evidence to support the effectiveness of the curriculum?
- What kind of professional development is available for teachers?
- Are specific materials required to implement the curriculum?
- Does the curriculum provide guidance for parent involvement and transition to kindergarten?

The *Nebraska Early Learning Guidelines for Ages 3 to 5* provide information about what children can typically be expected to know and be able to do by age five, and what adults can do to provide experiences and environments that support learning across the domains. It is a resource to assist teachers in planning meaningful learning experiences for young children. Early childhood programs will be expected to use the guidelines to support the chosen curriculum. Complimentary copies are available by calling 402-471-3184.

Further information about curriculum selection can be found in the resource document, *Early Childhood Programs: A Guide to Serving Children Birth to Kindergarten Entrance Age in Center-Based Early Childhood Programs operated by Public School Districts, Educational Service Units and their Community Partners* available online at http://www.education.ne.gov/OEC/B_5_programs.html

The use of technology and interactive media has become more prevalent in early childhood classrooms. Program administrators and teachers must carefully consider how the use of technology enhances the curriculum and assure that it is used in a way that is appropriate for the age, developmental level, needs, linguistic background and abilities of each child. Further information about the use of technology and interactive media can be found in the joint position statement, *Technology and Interactive Media as Tools in Early Childhood Programs Serving children from Birth through Age 8*, of the National Association for the Education of Young Children and the Fred Rogers Center for Early Learning and Children's Media available online at www.naeyc.org/positionstatements

7. Child Assessment and Program Quality Evaluation

All children, birth to kindergarten-entrance age, in any early childhood education program established by a public school board or educational service unit must be assigned a NDE Student Identifier through the Nebraska Student and Staff Record System (NSSRS). This Student ID will allow NDE to report academic progress of children who participated in the early childhood education program as they progress through school.

All district and ESU operated early childhood programs, including those receiving an Early Childhood Education Grant, are required to subscribe to an online assessment system to report child assessment data for Results Matter. For the purpose of reporting progress and growth of children, NDE requires all programs to use Teaching Strategies GOLD.

NDE will send information regarding the subscription process to the online administrator(s) in each district. The district will then be responsible for contacting Teaching Strategies to complete the subscription for the total number

of children birth to age five they anticipate in their early childhood programs for the upcoming year and to submit payment directly to Teaching Strategies. In order to assist with budget planning, the 2015-16 cost per child per year under the NDE administrative umbrella is $10.45 per child per year. There is no additional cost for archived children equal to the number of children in the subscription. There is a $0.50 per child archive fee for children above the subscription total.

The following sources may be accessed to cover the subscription cost:

- Local district resources, including TEEOSA
- Early Childhood Education Program Grant
- Title 1 (for eligible programs)
- Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) base and enrollment/poverty (for children with IFSPs/IEPs)
- Partner Agencies (Head Start, community-based programs, etc)
- Parent fees
- Private funders

For new grants, in program year 1 and 2, the program quality evaluation will be conducted by an external evaluator using the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale-Third Edition (ECERS-3). Districts will be required to create an action plan for program improvement for each of the areas not meeting the defined quality score based on the observation. In the year 2 observation, progress should be made on the goals from the action plan. If progress has not been made, a third observation will occur in the spring of year 2. Failure to meet the goals will result in a discontinuation of grant funding.

For expansion grants, ECERS-3 observations will occur in the fall. The grant-funded classrooms will be required to create an action plan for program improvement for each of the areas not meeting the defined quality score and follow-up will include making progress on those goals. Lack of progress could result in a discontinuation of grant funding.

In program year 3 and beyond, NDE will contract with observers to complete observations in a percentage of classrooms across the state. Grant funded classrooms will be required to complete an action plan for program improvement. Districts should assure that classroom teachers and other appropriate staff attend training to be familiar with, and implement classroom practices consistent with the ECERS-3. A schedule of training for the 2017 calendar year is available at http://www.education.ne.gov/OEC/train/ers/ers.html

Voluntary program accreditation through the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) for center-based programs will continue to be identified as an additional measure of program quality. In addition, districts may choose to participate in the Nebraska quality rating and improvement system, Step Up to Quality.

Further information about child assessment and program evaluation can be found in the *Results Matter Technical Assistance Document for Early Childhood Education Programs operated by Public School Districts and Educational Service Units* available online at http://www.education.ne.gov/OEC/rm/rm.html

8. Professional Development

Nebraska's early childhood professional development system, *Early Learning Connection*, is facilitated by the NDE Early Childhood Training Center and the regional system of Early Learning Connection Partnerships. All areas of Nebraska are served by the regional system working to support professional development for early childhood programs.

Serving as part of the foundation for Nebraska's professional development system is *Nebraska's Core Competencies for Early Childhood Professionals*. This document provides information about the knowledge, competencies, and skills that adults need to effectively work with children ages birth to five years. It is a resource to assist teachers and program administrators in identifying professional development goals, assessing staff skills, writing job descriptions, etc. One complimentary copy per applicant partnership is available by calling 402-557-6880 or 800-892-4453. Throughout the year, NDE may identify and require specific professional development activities for program staff. Further information about professional development can be found in the resource document, *Early Childhood Programs: A Guide to Serving Children Birth to Kindergarten Entrance Age in Center-Based Early Childhood Programs operated by Public School Districts, Educational Service Units and their Community Partners* available online at http://www.education.ne.gov/OEC/B_5_programs.html

B. FUNDING AVAILABILITY AND MATCHING REQUIREMENTS

1. Funding Options

As a result of provisions in state statutes, districts which have received an early childhood education program grant for three or more years and/or have been approved for three or more years are shifting a portion of their funding from the Early Childhood Education Grant Program to the Tax Equity and Educational Opportunities Support Act (state aid) in 2017-18. This frees a **limited** amount of grant funds to be made available for competitive applications for new or expanded programs.

Grants awarded to districts or ESUs for a **new** early childhood program shall be eligible for continuation grant funds each year for at least three years, based on continued compliance with grant guidelines including the program quality evaluation and *Rule 11 – Regulations for the Approval of Prekindergarten Programs Established by School Boards or Educational Service Units and for the issuance of Early Childhood Education Grants*. Grants awarded to districts or ESUs for **expansion** of an existing early childhood education program will receive grant funds for at least one year, with continued funding dependent on how many years the existing program has been approved and the amount of state aid calculations for eligible four-year olds and compliance with grant guidelines including the program quality evaluation. All continuation grant awards are subject to the availability of state funds.

Districts and ESUs may apply for funding for a part day classroom and/or a full day classroom. A **part day** classroom is one that is in session with a group of children for less than 6 hours per day. A **full day** classroom is one that is in session with a group of children for 6 hours or more per day. Applicants should carefully consider the results of the family and community needs assessment before designing the length of the classroom day.

Districts or ESUs that have received an early childhood education program grant or are currently operating an early childhood program are eligible to apply for expansion grants under Option 1 (below) to serve previously unserved children. Districts which offer a half-day kindergarten are eligible to apply only for an early childhood education classroom that is for part of the day (less than 6 hours). All programs must operate a minimum of 12 hours per week and 450 hours per year. Grants awarded for 2017-18 will be expected to begin serving children no later than January 2018.

Option 1: One classroom grouping of 11 to 20 children. Funding for multiple classrooms may be requested. Programs will be funded per classroom as follows:
- Up to $130,000 for a classroom of three- and four-year old children which operates for a full day (6 hours or more) for the grant year (total budget of at least $260,000 including local match).
- Up to $50,000 for a classroom of three- and four-year old children which operates for part of the day (less than 6 hours) for the grant year (total budget of at least $100,000 including local match).

Start-Up Costs: For programs beginning Fall 2017, grants are based on a full year of operation plus up to $25,000 per physical classroom space for start-up costs. For programs beginning January 2018, grants are based on start-up costs plus one-half year of operation.

Option 2: For small schools where the number of 3- and 4-year-old children in the community or defined service area is such that a classroom of 11 – 20 children as described in Option 1 is not possible, schools can consider Option 2. This allows for one classroom grouping of 7 to 10 children. Programs will be funded per classroom as follows:

- Up to $65,000 for a classroom of three- and four-year old children which operates for a <u>full day</u> (6 hours or more) for the grant year (total budget of at least $130,000 including local match).
- Up to $25,000 for a classroom of three- and four-year old children which operates for <u>part of the day</u> (less than 6 hours) for the grant year (total budget of at least $50,000 including local match).

Start-Up Costs: For programs beginning Fall 2017, grants are based on a full year of operation plus up to $25,000 per physical classroom space for start-up costs. For programs beginning January 2018, grants are based on start-up costs plus one-half year of operation.

Grant funds may not be used for indirect costs which exceed the district or ESU established restricted rate, for capital improvements, and/or for the purchase of buildings, land or vehicles.

2. <u>Matching Funds</u>

Each grantee district or ESU is required to provide matching funds which must be equal to, or greater than, the amount of the grant. To document the operating budget beyond the state funds, program applications must demonstrate that the program partners will coordinate or contract with existing programs and funding sources, including local, state, and federal funding sources. The program narrative and the budget narrative must clearly demonstrate that at least fifty percent (50%) of the total resources of the program will be contributed by the partnership through cash or in-kind match. Match includes funds and/or in-kind allocated by the school district through local district funds, Title 1, etc. and outside funds and/or in-kind from external partners (i.e. Head Start). The amount of the grant designated as start-up costs is not required to be matched.

Further information about funding and allowable costs can be found in the resource document, *Early Childhood Programs: A Guide to Serving Children Birth to Kindergarten Entrance Age in Center-Based Early Childhood Programs operated by Public School Districts, Educational Service Units and their Community Partners* available online at http://www.education.ne.gov/OEC/B_5_programs.html

C. DESCRIPTION

1. <u>Eligible Applicants</u>

Eligible applicants are public school districts, individually or in cooperation with other districts, and educational service units.

2. <u>Time Lines</u>

The closing time and date for receipt of applications is **5:00 pm CDT on Friday, March 3, 2017**. Applicants **must** send a completed application **via email** to Kristine Luebbe at kristine.luebbe@nebraska.gov. Confirmation of receipt of the application will be emailed to each applicant district or ESU. Grant applications received by any other means may not be considered for funding.

a) The total amount of grant funding is dependent upon certification of state aid which normally does not occur until near the end of the legislative session. The timeline listed below should be considered tentative.

b) It is anticipated that successful applicants will be notified of the results of the review by late April or early May 2017, subject to approval by the State Board of Education. Those applications meeting all requirements and recommended for approval by the review committee will be presented to the State Board of Education for approval at the May 2017 meeting. If the certification of state aid is delayed, State Board of Education approval will be at the June 2017 meeting. Applicants whose proposals are not recommended for funding will receive written notification with comments.

c) Grant awards will be made following approval by the State Board of Education.

d) Funds for approved projects will be available as of July 1, 2017 or when approved by the State Board of Education, whichever is later. **All expenditures must be completed prior to June 30, 2018**.

D. APPLICATION REVIEW

1. Process

   a) All eligible applications will be reviewed and rated by an external panel of persons knowledgeable in early childhood education.

   b) The results of the rating will be reviewed by the Commissioner of Education prior to the announcement of project selection and are subject to approval by the State Board of Education.

   c) NDE intends to fund programs widely distributed across the state in both rural and urban areas.

   d) Any and all grant awards are subject to the availability of state funds.

   e) The Nebraska Department of Education reserves the right to not award any grants.

2. Scoring

   a) Proposals will be scored on a point system with a maximum 100 points. (110 with priority points)

   b) Proposals will be rated according to criteria specified in the application requirements.

Each proposal must contain the information described below. An Application Template is included with this RFP. All forms must be downloaded from the web, completed and submitted via email. Text boxes within the application template will automatically expand to include all necessary information. In previous years, review committees have indicated that applicants should pay particular attention to the mechanics of writing and to accuracy in calculating budgets.

1. Application Form: Each application shall contain a completed and signed application form. A scanned signature is acceptable.

2. Partnership Statement of Commitment: **Each** agency/program identified as a partner, including the applicant district or ESU, is required to complete and sign a partnership statement of commitment that describes the contributions to the early childhood program. Scanned signatures are acceptable.

3. Application Narrative: Using the template pages provided, applicants will describe the proposed early childhood education program. Before preparing the application narrative, applicants should read carefully *Rule 11 - Regulations for Early Childhood Education Programs*. The criteria used to review and score proposals are described within each component of the narrative.

    a) Program Planning and Community Needs Assessment **(Maximum 10 points)**:

        1) Current Status: Describe the current availability of programs and services (i.e., child care center, Head Start, family child care home) for preschool age children within the proposed service area. Include the nature of the program(s) and number of children served.

        2) Need: Provide a justification of the need for an early childhood education program grant in the community. This should be based on the results of a current community needs assessment conducted in coordination with community partners. Describe the community's unmet needs for early childhood education for three- and four-year-old children. Describe the needs of working families within the service area and how the proposed early childhood program will impact these families. Describe the barriers to the provision of services.

        3) Community Characteristics: Describe any significant characteristics of the community and/or changes in the community demographics (i.e., immigrant population, economic status).

    b) Partnerships **(Maximum 25 points)**

        1) Partners: Describe all efforts to include community partners and if community partners declined to participate, identify the partner and cite the reason(s) for not participating. Identify program partners and describe the participation of the partners in the planning process. Describe how partners will be involved in the start-up process and in the implementation of the program. Describe the plan for developing written partnership agreements.

2) <u>Advisory Committee</u>: Describe the plan for establishing the local early childhood advisory committee. Include a purpose statement for the advisory committee. Identify the roles and/or individuals to be represented on the advisory committee. Describe the responsibility of the members relative to implementation, operation and continuous improvement of the early childhood program.

c) <u>Program Description</u> **(Maximum 50 points, plus a possible 10 priority points)**:
   Priority points: Applications for new programs may receive up to 10 priority points

   1) <u>Start-Up Plan</u>: Identify the anticipated activities and timeline for planning and implementing the early childhood education program in the community. Programs must begin serving children no later than January 2018.

   2) <u>Program Design</u>: Identify the elements of the early childhood education program. As identified in the community need section above, describe how the program will meet the needs of families for transportation, child care, etc. Describe the family development and support activities, including a specific plan for conducting home visits. Describe the plan for transitioning children into kindergarten. Describe how the early childhood education program is/will be part of the district continuous improvement processes.

   3) <u>Student Population</u>: Identify the population of children who will be served in the early childhood education program. Identify the number of three-year-olds and the number of four-year-olds, including four-year-olds that are considered *at-risk* and who will be eligible to attend kindergarten in the next school year.

   4) <u>Staff</u>: Identify how the program will recruit and assure that all teachers and teacher aides meet the requirements of *Rule 11 – Regulations for the Approval of Prekindergarten Programs Established by School Boards or Educational Service Units and for the issuance of Early Childhood Education Grants*. Identify, if known, the teacher(s) and the teacher aide(s). Describe how the early childhood staff will be supported to provide time for the teacher(s) and para(s) to plan together for curriculum/instruction and assessment. Describe the governance structure; specifically identify who is responsible for supervising and evaluating staff in the early childhood education program. Identify the early childhood program coordinator/administrator and the number of early childhood credits earned by that person (see *Rule 10*, 07.01B).

   5) <u>Curriculum Framework</u>: Identify the selected curriculum framework. Describe how the selected curriculum is research-based and provides a play-oriented learning environment which facilitates the optimal growth and development of children, with opportunities for age-appropriate learning experiences through active involvement with people and materials. Describe how the *Nebraska Early Learning Guidelines for Ages 3 to 5* will be used to support the curriculum. If applicable, describe how technology and interactive media will be integrated into the curriculum and will support the learning and development of the children.

   6) <u>Child Assessment and Program Evaluation</u>: Describe how data from child assessments and program quality assessments will be used to connect assessment, curriculum, teaching strategies, and classroom practices to meet the group and individual needs of the children.

   7) <u>Professional Development</u>: Describe how individual and program needs for professional development will be determined. Identify the training needed to implement the selected curriculum framework and child assessment. Identify the training resources available within the partnership and the timeline for

providing the training. Describe how the early childhood education program will coordinate with the regional Early Learning Connection to provide professional development opportunities. If known, identify the person(s) from the program and/or advisory group who will serve as a member of the Early Learning Connection regional partnership.

d) <u>Combination of Funding Sources and Budget Narrative</u> **(Maximum 15 points)**:

Applicants are required to prepare a budget with two sections, one for start-up costs and one for ongoing operating costs. For programs beginning Fall 2017, the total grant is based on a full year of operation plus up to $25,000 for start-up costs. For programs beginning January 2018, the total grant includes start-up costs plus one-half year of operation.

1) <u>Section 1: Start-up Budget and Budget Narrative</u>
   a) Budget: Provide a budget for the start-up costs. A start-up budget summary form is included. Match is not required for the start-up budget.

   b) Budget Narrative: All anticipated costs necessary to establish the early childhood education program must be fully explained in a detailed budget narrative. The budget must relate directly to the start-up plan identified in the proposal and should provide a rationale for the projected costs. Start-up funds may be used for salaries, professional development, facilitation of community partnerships, classroom materials, supplies and equipment, and minor facility renovation. **Justification must be provided for any single item over $1000**.

2) <u>Section 2: Operating Budget and Budget Narrative</u>
   a) Budget: Provide a budget for the operating costs of the program. An operating budget summary form is included. Matching resources must be included for the operating budget. The budget summary form should clearly identify the portions to be supported through grant funds as well as funding or services provided by the applicant and/or partner agencies.

   b) Budget Narrative: Applicants should describe a plan to coordinate and use a combination of funding sources to maximize the participation of diverse groups of children. Refer to *Rule 11 – Regulations for the Approval of Prekindergarten Programs Established by School Boards or Educational Service Units and for the issuance of Early Childhood Education Grants* (Sections 004.04A2 through 004.04A10) for a list of funding sources in addition to grant funds. All anticipated costs necessary to carry out the program operation must be fully explained in a detailed budget narrative. The budget must relate directly to the activities and staff identified in the proposal and should provide a rationale for the projected costs (e.g., how employee benefits are derived). **Justification must be provided for any single item over $1000**. **Non-allowable expenditures include indirect costs which exceed the district or ESU established rate, capital improvements, and purchase of buildings, land, or vehicles.**

F. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

1. Further Information

Questions and requests for additional information should be directed to one of the Education Specialists at the NDE Office of Early Childhood listed below:

Catie Limbach; 402-471-0951; catie.limbach@nebraska.gov
Kristine Luebbe; 402-471-1860; kristine.luebbe@nebraska.gov
Linda Meyers; 402-471-2980; linda.meyers@nebraska.gov
Kim Texel; 402-471-4386; kim.texel@nebraska.gov

2. Resources

Additional information and an extensive list of web resources can be found in the resource document, *Early Childhood Programs: A Guide to Serving Children Birth to Kindergarten Entrance Age in Center-Based Early Childhood Programs operated by Public School Districts, Educational Service Units and their Community Partners* available online at http://www.education.ne.gov/OEC/B_5_programs.html